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TELUGU AW17

755 776 782 away by the people and eaten in their homes, but the idea is that the goddess takes the essence and leaves the worshippers the material substance. This takes till about three a.m. next morning; and then begins another important part of the ceremonies.

Some of the rice from the heap, over which the ram was sacrificed and its blood poured out, is taken and put in a flat basket, and some of the entrails of the buffalo are mixed with it. The intestines of the lamb, which was first killed, are put over the neck of a Mālā, and its liver is placed in his mouth,[1] while another Mālā takes the basket of rice soaked in blood and mixed with the entrails of the buffalo. A procession is then formed [786] with these two weird figures in the middle. The man with the liver in his mouth is worked up into a state of frantic excitement and is supposed to be inspired by the goddess. He has to be held by men on either side of him, or kept fast with ropes, to prevent his rushing away; and all round him are the *ryots*, *i.e.* the small farmers, and the Mālās, flourishing clubs and swords, and throwing limes into the air, to drive away the evil spirits. As the procession moves through the village, the people shout out "Food! Food!" and the man who carries the basket sprinkles the rice soaked in blood over the houses to protect them from evil spirits. As he walks along, he shouts out, at intervals, that he sees the evil spirits, and falls down in a faint. Then lambs have to be sacrificed on the spot and limes thrown into the air and cocoanuts broken, to drive away the demons and bring the man to his senses. And so the procession moves through the village, amid frantic excitement, till, as the day dawns, they return to the canopy, where the great mother is peacefully reposing.

At about ten a.m. a fresh round of ceremonies begins. Some meat is cut from the carcass of the buffalo and cooked with some cholam, and then given to five little Mālā boys, *siddhalu*, the innocents, as they are called. They are all covered over with a large cloth,

[1] Cf. pp. 109, 148 below

All this time[1] too, some nautch—
girls come and dance in a booth erected in front of the 796
image and work themselves up into a state of frenzy, 776
during which they are supposed to be inspired by the 782
deities, and utter oracles to the worshippers. When 786
the epidemic begins to abate, the Brāhman pūjārī
closes his part of the proceedings and departs.

Then, on that afternoon and evening, animal sacri- [787]
fices are offered under the booth. On the first animal
killed, which is generally a goat, water is poured from
a brass vessel, to see if it shivers.[1] If it does, it is
taken as a good omen that the goddess is propitiated
and the disease will disappear. Then other animals are
brought and, in accordance with a very common division
of functions in the Telugu country, a washerman kills
the sheep, goats, and fowls, and a Mādigā the buffaloes.
The heads of the sheep and goats, as well as of the
buffaloes, have the right forelegs put crosswise in the
mouths, the faces smeared with fat from the entrails,
and a lighted lamp placed above them. The blood is
caught in a basket full of boiled rice, and the rice and
blood are sprinkled round the village, while a Mādigā
carries on his own head the head of a buffalo exactly as
is done elsewhere. Here, too, great care is taken to
prevent any person from another village taking away
any of the rice and blood, lest the other village should
get all the benefit of the sacrifice, and evils of all kinds
descend on the unhappy villagers who have offered it.
The ceremony of impaling live animals on stakes fixed
round a wooden car,[2] and dragging them off to the
boundary of the village is also practised here.

Bhīmadole, near Ellore. At another village, called 241
Bhīmadole, about twenty miles from Ellore, I came 776
across one of the few instances I have met with of any 782
direct connexion between the harvest and the worship 796
of a village goddess. There is an annual festival held
there about harvest time, in November or December,
lasting one day, which is always a Tuesday. About half
a ton of rice is boiled in the middle of the village, taken

[1] See page 55. [2] See p. 58.

[see cat 116, p 68 -- ANALYST]